

Children's homes inspection – Full

Inspection date	30/08/2016
Unique reference number	SC031504
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered manager	Valerie Mower
Registered individual	Claire Windeatt
Inspector	Tina Maddison

Inspection date	30/08/2016
Previous inspection judgement	Sustained effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.	
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good

SC031504

Summary of findings

The children's home provision is good because:

- Young people feel safe when they stay at the service. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place. Safe practice of staff enables the young people to enjoy their stays, and parents are able to relax, knowing that their children are being kept safe when staying away from home.
- Healthcare needs of young people are fully met during their stays. Staff are effectively trained to care for the young people's sometimes complex healthcare needs and to safely manage and administer their medication.
- Young people are encouraged to take their possessions when they stay for respite care, such as their own duvet covers and toys, to put in their allocated bedroom, which is usually the same bedroom each time they stay. Bedrooms are well decorated, clean and homely.
- Young people are encouraged to give their views and opinions and are supported to do so verbally and through the use of sign language, pictures and symbols.
- Behaviour is very well managed. Staff successfully implement consistent boundaries, expectations and routines. The young people learn to develop considerate relationships and friendships with others in the home. The young people are carefully matched when staff decide which young people will stay on which nights.
- Accommodation is spacious, homely and adapted to meet young people's needs. The home is decorated in bright colours with pictures and symbols to help young people understand where things they need are located in the home.
- Young people have fun and make progress through trusting, nurturing relationships with the skilled and consistent staff team that knows the young people and their parents very well and is 'tuned in' to their needs. The staff are skilled and are able to quickly spot if a young person is not well or is trying to communicate their thoughts and feelings in their own way.
- Young people benefit from engaging in a wide range of activities in and out of the home. Progress of young people is monitored, and targets are set, although this is not always comprehensively documented. Achievements, no matter how small, are celebrated.
- The home's development plan is a work in progress. Leaders and managers are clear about how the home will continue to improve and develop, but this

is not yet documented.

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the service should take account of the following recommendations:

- Ensure that a comprehensive development plan is in place for the home that makes best use of information from independent and internal monitoring systems to ensure continuous improvement. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 55, paragraph 10.24)
- Ensure that arrangements are in place to comprehensively document and review, at regular intervals, the progress of young people and how they are benefiting from receiving respite care at the home. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 21, paragraph 4.2)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This short break centre is operated by a local authority and is registered to provide short break care and accommodation for up to five young people who have a learning disability and/or physical disability.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/03/2016	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
16/12/2015	Full	Requires improvement
05/02/2015	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
21/11/2014	Full	Adequate

Inspection judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Good
A strength of this home is the way in which young people, regardless of their ability to communicate verbally, are encouraged to express their wishes, needs and choices. The staff achieve this through the use of total communication methods, such as symbols, pictures and sign language. The staff are a long-standing and consistent team that knows the young people very well and is very knowledgeable about each young person's way of communicating and what they mean. For example, staff know when a young person makes a particular sound, that they are happy, sad, in pain or excited. During their stays at the home, staff encourage young people to learn new skills and to engage in new activities. Targets are set for young people to achieve skills, such as using the toilet independently, learning to walk on rough ground or sitting at the table to eat meals with others. The staff know which targets have been set and the outcomes, but the progress of young people is not always fully documented, so that the extent of their progress is clear to them and their parents. A log of activities that the young people have engaged in and achievements they have made are kept in picture form. This effectively demonstrates to young people and their parents what skills can be practised at home and where they have visited during their stay. Communication and partnership working between the home, parents, school and other professionals is effective. The staff attend reviews and work with parents and school, to ensure continuity and consistency for young people. Parents comment positively about how the staff support them and that communication is good. One parent said, 'My child has learned tolerance for others and how to socialise. She has learned confidence in the kitchen. I would recommend the service. They couldn't do anything better. Staff communicate well with me and staff will ask [or] tell me what she has done.' The young people enjoy a variety of activities in and out of the home. An activity is arranged for each evening, or during the day in the school holidays. These include visiting farms, leisure parks, the zoo, cooking, making their own lunch and swimming. The home has a wide variety of activities, such as a sensory sand area, water play, computers, sensory room, ball-pool room and play equipment in the large garden, including a bouncy castle during the summer, zip wire and swings. Young people are carefully matched for each stay. This information is documented on an impact risk assessment, so that young people of a similar age and ability and who have similar interests are booked for their stays at the same time. This	

enables young people to make friends, and staff can arrange activities to suit the whole group.

Healthcare needs of the young people are fully met during their stays. During the inspection, it was observed that a young person needed immediate specialist health care. This was given by staff, who undertook the care required expertly and with kindness and patience. Medication is brought in for each stay by the young people and is safely stored and administered by the staff. Healthcare needs are documented in care plans, and staff spoken with were knowledgeable about each young person's healthcare needs and said that they are well trained and confident to meet these needs.

The young people enjoy staying in a home that is well decorated and maintained. The exterior of the building could be viewed as institutional in appearance, as it is a purpose-built construction that was built some years ago. The staff have worked very hard to reduce this institutional appearance and to make the building appear as homely as possible. The young people benefit from bathrooms that are fitted with adaptations for young people who have a physical disability. The home is very spacious, with many rooms that young people are able to go to if they require peace and quiet. Bedrooms are clean and well decorated, and young people can bring in personal possessions to personalise their bedrooms. The staff always try to allocate the young people the same bedroom, so that the young people enjoy continuity and stability.

The young people benefit from smooth and well-organised transitions in and out of the home. Prior to their first stay, parents and young people are encouraged to visit for tea and meet the staff. If required, there could be a few visits until the young person is confident that they know where they are going to stay and are familiar with the routine.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
Parents commented that they are confident that staff will keep their child safe when they are staying at the home. One parent commented, 'My child is absolutely safe here. We absolutely feel involved and know all of the members of staff.' Another parent said, 'I know my child is safe here.' All members of staff spoken with said that they are confident to use the home's safeguarding procedures, if	

necessary, to safeguard the young people. Staff are vigilant and know the young people they care for well, so are able to quickly detect any changes in behaviour that may indicate that the young person is worried about something.

The staff successfully achieve a balance of allowing young people to take risks and learn, while keeping them safe. For example, the young people are supported to use the zip wire in the garden, take part in activities and use kitchen equipment. One young person was supported to enable them to learn to walk alone to the local shop. This is achieved through effective risk assessment and clearly documented control measures to be used by staff to manage the risk.

The staff effectively manage the sometimes complex and challenging behaviour of the young people through establishing trusting and supportive relationships and implementing consistent boundaries. The use of physical restraint is very rare, and behaviour management plans document strategies to be used to manage behaviour, such as the use of appropriate humour or distraction. The staff are trained in the use of physical restraint to use as a last resort to keep everyone safe. Consequences are used if a young person is deemed to understand the consequence and it will be effective. Routines run smoothly and consistently so that the young people know what to expect, and this helps them to feel confident and safe when they stay at the home.

A robust recruitment procedure is effectively implemented to ensure that only suitable persons are employed at the home. Health and safety is well managed to ensure that all necessary checks of equipment and systems are regularly undertaken.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
The registered manager role is shared between two experienced and effective managers. This job-share arrangement works, because of effective communication and joint-working arrangements. Staff confirmed that they feel well led and managed. Both managers are working towards their level 5 management qualification and are qualified social workers. Leaders and managers are committed to ensuring that the home continues to develop and improve. Both managers are making a visit to an outstanding provider to learn about how they can improve. The requirement from the previous	

inspection is fully met. The home has reduced the number of young people for whom it provides a service from 10 to five per night. One wing of the home now has been completely closed. The managers have written a brief development plan, but it is not in one document. How improvements will be put in place and timescales for their completion are unclear. Other records are well organised, and effective management oversight ensures that they contain up-to-date, relevant information that clearly informs staff how they are to care for the young people and keep them safe.

Regular feedback forms are sent to parents and the young people in an accessible form. This feedback is acted upon by the managers. For example, as a result of feedback, the zip wire was purchased, as were musical instruments and more dolls.

Effective links are in place with other agencies, including the local authority designated officer, police, health services and advocacy services. Staff meetings regularly take place, and staff say that they feel confident to approach managers with any concerns and their views. Staff receive regular supervision and six-monthly appraisals of their performance that identify any training needs or performance issues that need to be addressed. All staff are appropriately qualified, and the young people benefit from being cared for by an experienced, long-standing and stable staff team. One member of staff said, 'I would describe working here as great. It is a very happy place to work. I look forward to coming to work.'

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection'.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of children looked after is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place. However, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or that result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference that adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

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